

DAVID

The POET
AND KING



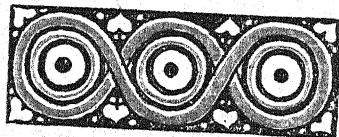
NEWELL DWIGHT HILLIS

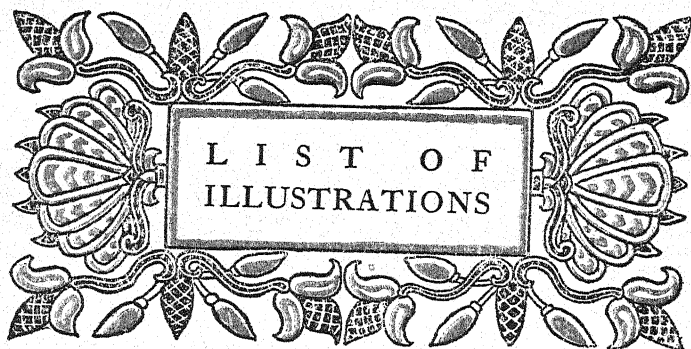
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1901

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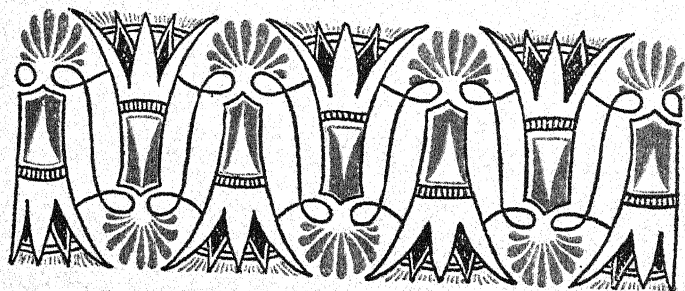


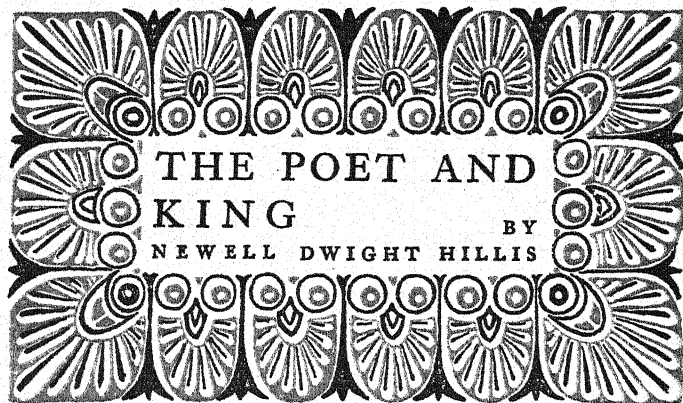
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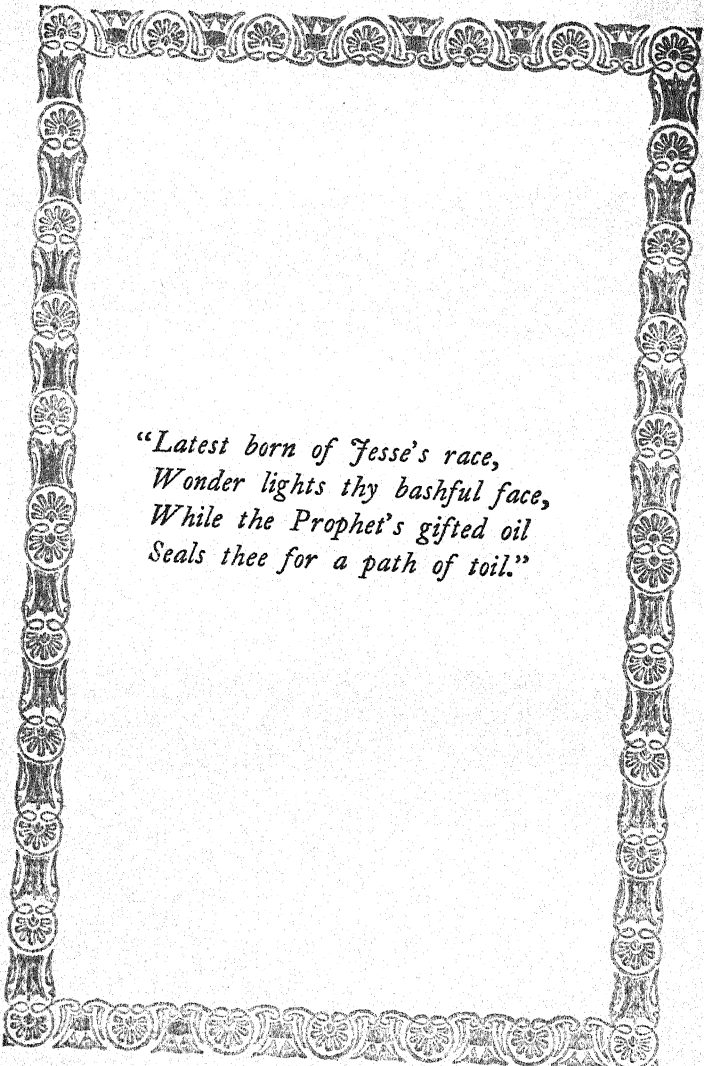
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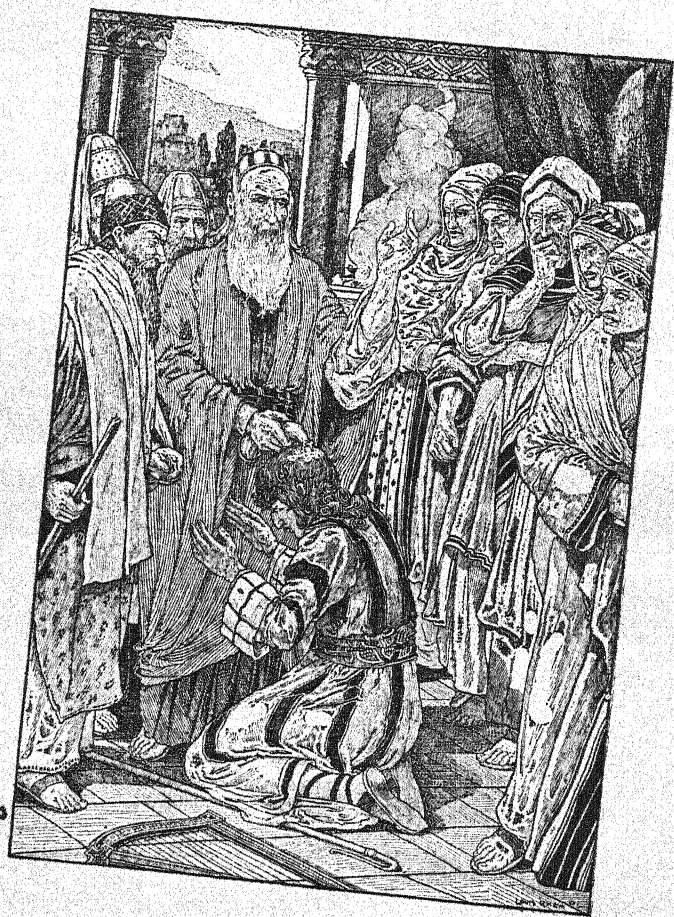
THE POET AND
KING

BY
NEWELL DWIGHT HILLIS



*"Latest born of Jesse's race,
Wonder lights thy bashful face,
While the Prophet's gifted oil
Seals thee for a path of toil."*







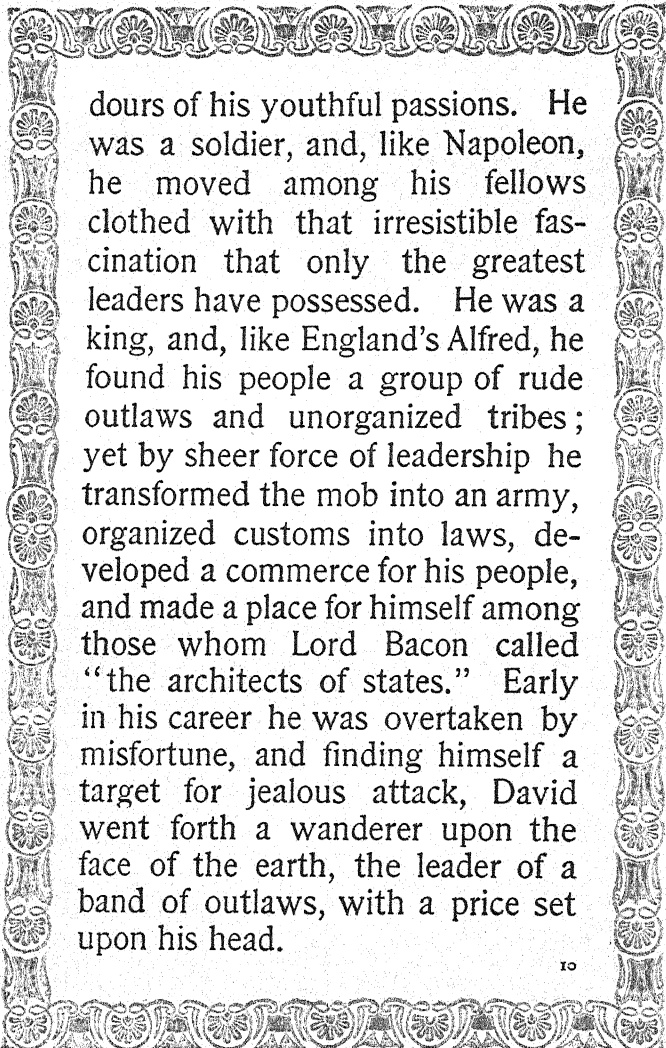
DAVID ANOINTED BY SAMUEL AT BETHLEHEM



David, the Poet and King

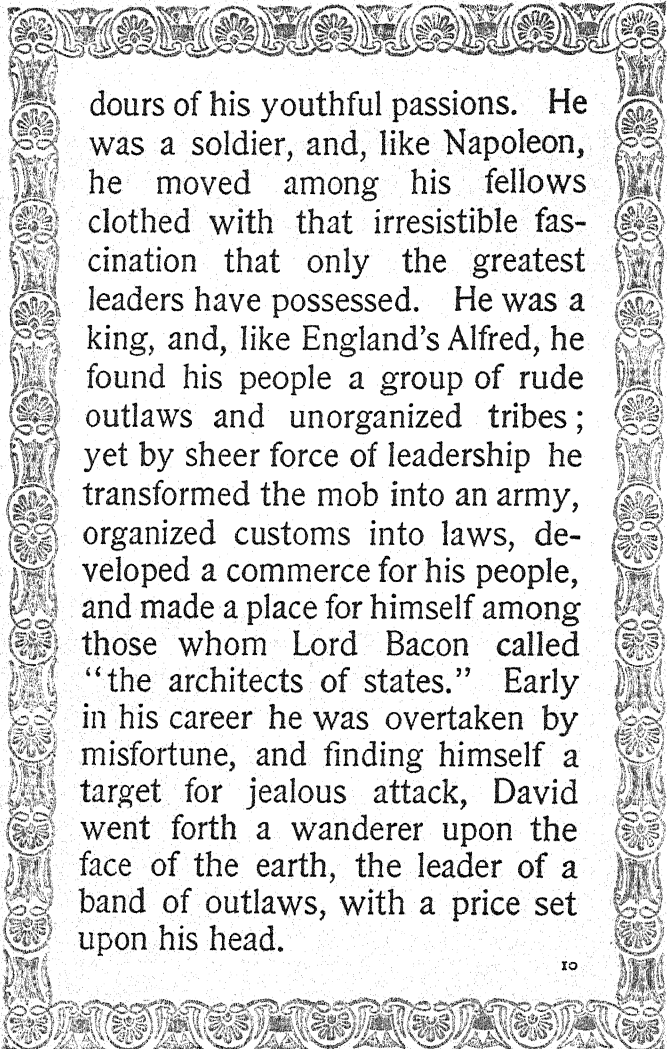
THE ROMANCE AND TRAGEDY OF
HIS CAREER AND FALL, AND THE
GLORY OF HIS RECOVERY ALSO

BY common consent David is one of the most fascinating figures in history. He stands forth the child of genius, ample in faculty, fertile in resource, and rich in all those qualities that stir admiration and evoke love. His life was full of contrasts, honours, misfortunes, sufferings and victory. He was a poet, and, like Robert Burns, the Hebrew minstrel was as sensitive as an Æolian harp, now thrilling with the keenest delights and now throbbing with the sharpest agonies ; like Burns, too, David was slain at last by the stormy splen-

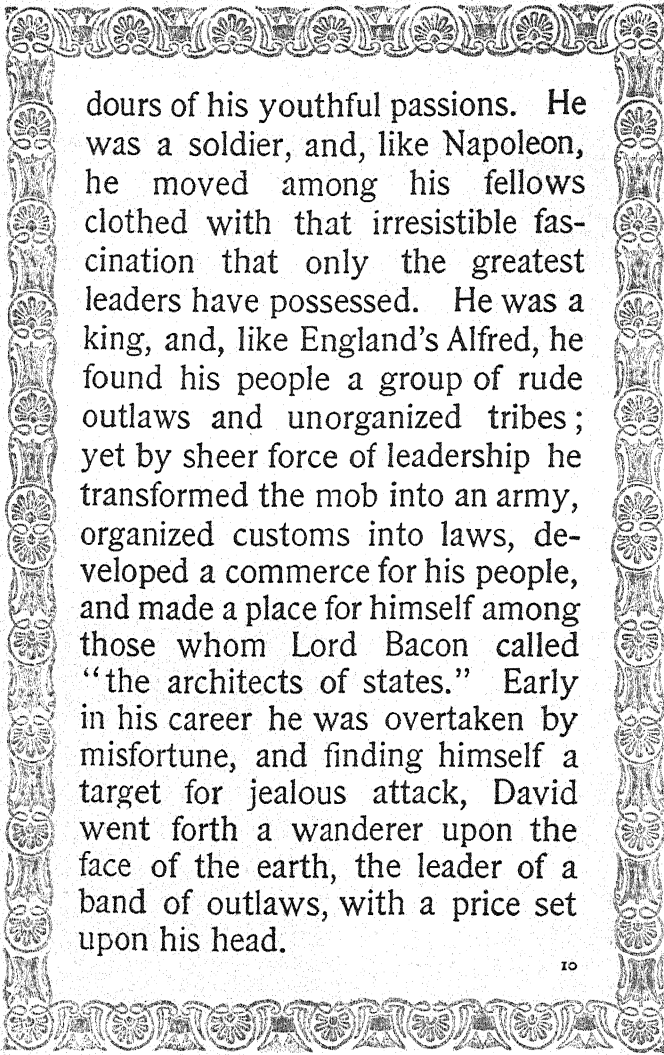


dours of his youthful passions. He was a soldier, and, like Napoleon, he moved among his fellows clothed with that irresistible fascination that only the greatest leaders have possessed. He was a king, and, like England's Alfred, he found his people a group of rude outlaws and unorganized tribes; yet by sheer force of leadership he transformed the mob into an army, organized customs into laws, developed a commerce for his people, and made a place for himself among those whom Lord Bacon called "the architects of states." Early in his career he was overtaken by misfortune, and finding himself a target for jealous attack, David went forth a wanderer upon the face of the earth, the leader of a band of outlaws, with a price set upon his head.

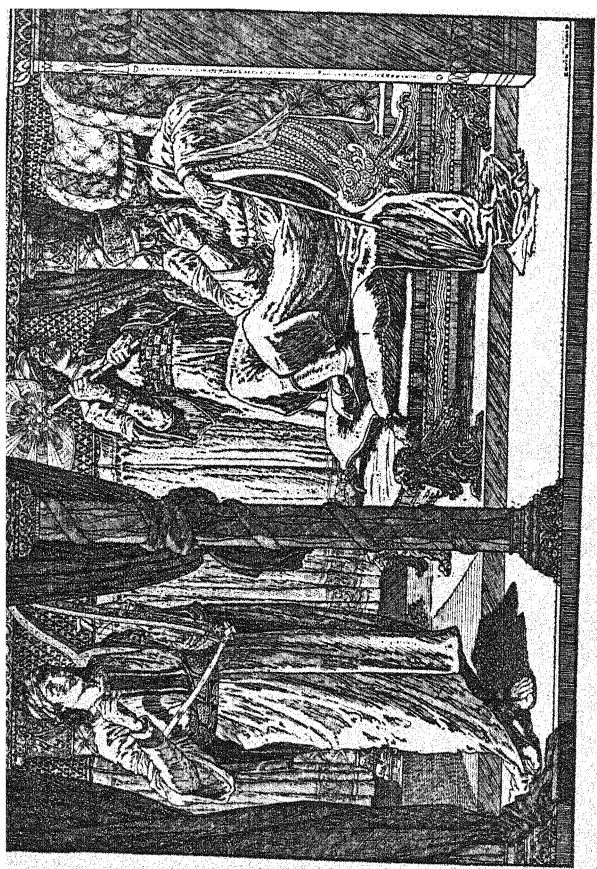




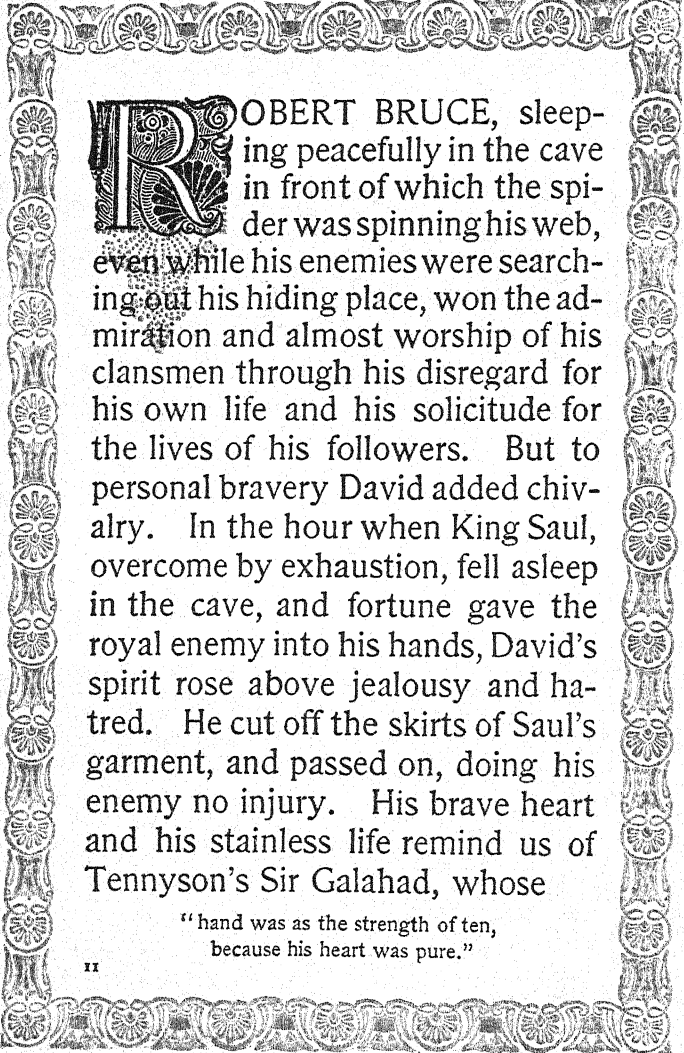
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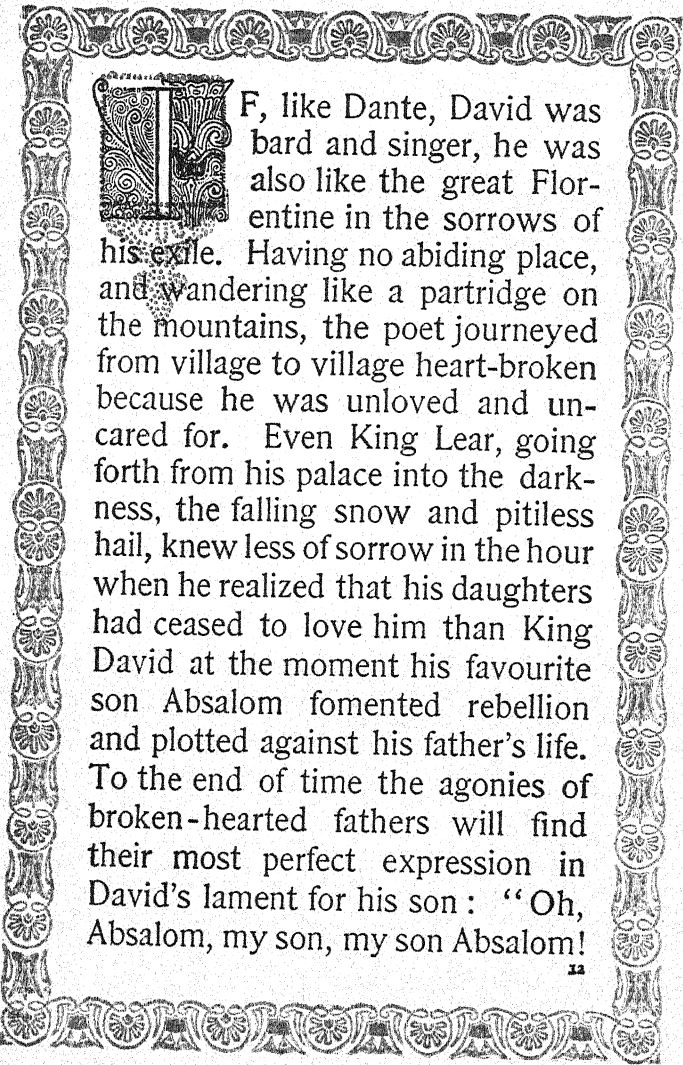


DAVID PLAYING THE HARP BEFORE SAUL



ROBERT BRUCE, sleeping peacefully in the cave in front of which the spider was spinning his web, even while his enemies were searching out his hiding place, won the admiration and almost worship of his clansmen through his disregard for his own life and his solicitude for the lives of his followers. But to personal bravery David added chivalry. In the hour when King Saul, overcome by exhaustion, fell asleep in the cave, and fortune gave the royal enemy into his hands, David's spirit rose above jealousy and hatred. He cut off the skirts of Saul's garment, and passed on, doing his enemy no injury. His brave heart and his stainless life remind us of Tennyson's Sir Galahad, whose

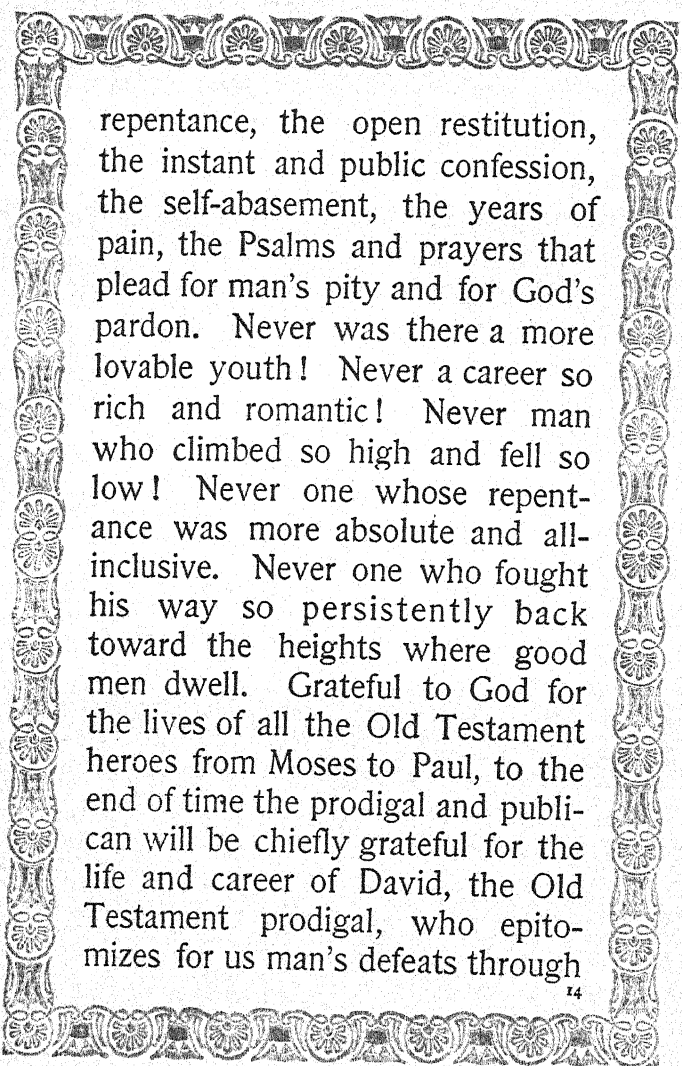
"hand was as the strength of ten,
because his heart was pure."



LF, like Dante, David was bard and singer, he was also like the great Florentine in the sorrows of his exile. Having no abiding place, and wandering like a partridge on the mountains, the poet journeyed from village to village heart-broken because he was unloved and uncared for. Even King Lear, going forth from his palace into the darkness, the falling snow and pitiless hail, knew less of sorrow in the hour when he realized that his daughters had ceased to love him than King David at the moment his favourite son Absalom fomented rebellion and plotted against his father's life. To the end of time the agonies of broken-hearted fathers will find their most perfect expression in David's lament for his son: "Oh, Absalom, my son, my son Absalom!"

Would God I had died for thee,
Oh Absalom, my son, my son."

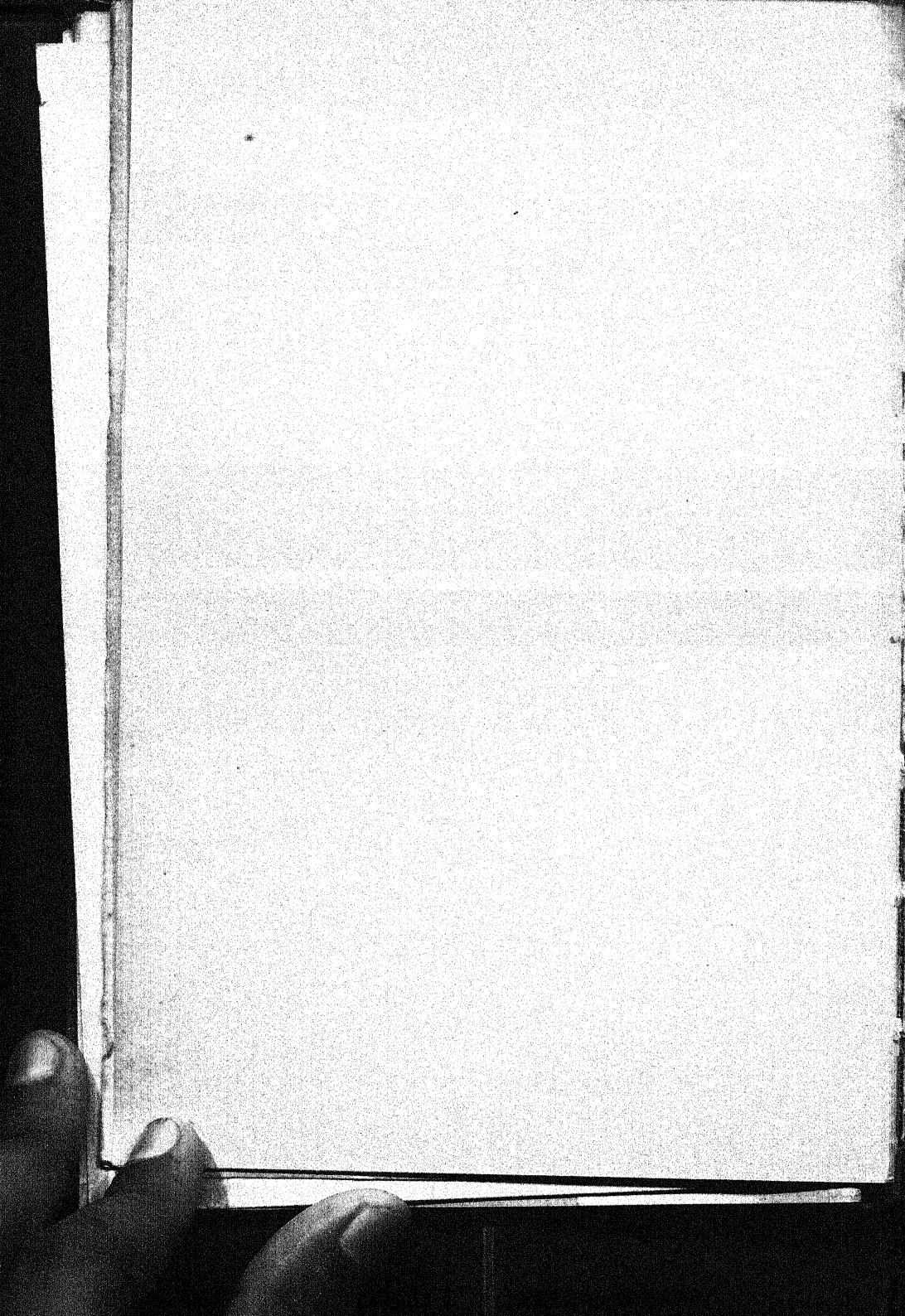
WHAT contrasts in this strangely coloured career! He was a peasant boy, court minstrel, chosen favourite of the young prince, the champion of the army, the conquering hero, borne upon the shoulders of the people through the streets, the rival of the king himself for the affections of the people; then leaping into the throne itself, he becomes law-maker, general, bard, commercial leader, statesman: Made soft by luxury, weakened by flattery, in an evil hour David yields to his passions, and sin sweeps through his life like a conflagration sweeping through a city and leaving only blackened timbers and ashes behind. Then comes the swift, sharp



repentance, the open restitution, the instant and public confession, the self-abasement, the years of pain, the Psalms and prayers that plead for man's pity and for God's pardon. Never was there a more lovable youth! Never a career so rich and romantic! Never man who climbed so high and fell so low! Never one whose repentance was more absolute and all-inclusive. Never one who fought his way so persistently back toward the heights where good men dwell. Grateful to God for the lives of all the Old Testament heroes from Moses to Paul, to the end of time the prodigal and publican will be chiefly grateful for the life and career of David, the Old Testament prodigal, who epitomizes for us man's defeats through

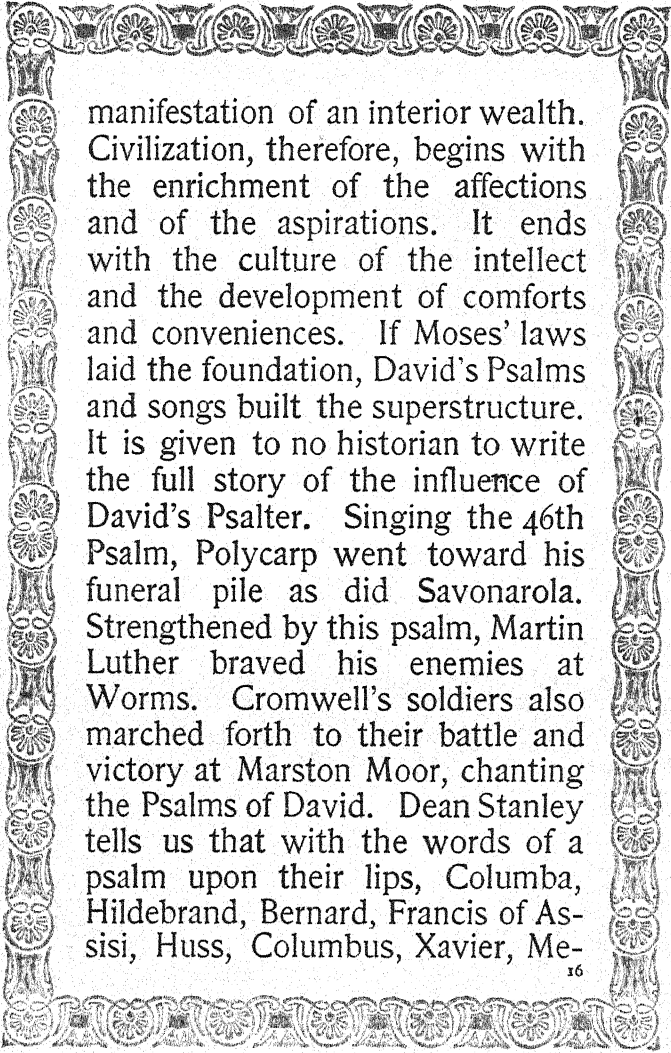
DAVID, WITH A SLING, KILLS GOLIATH





sin, and his recovery also through God's redeeming mercy.

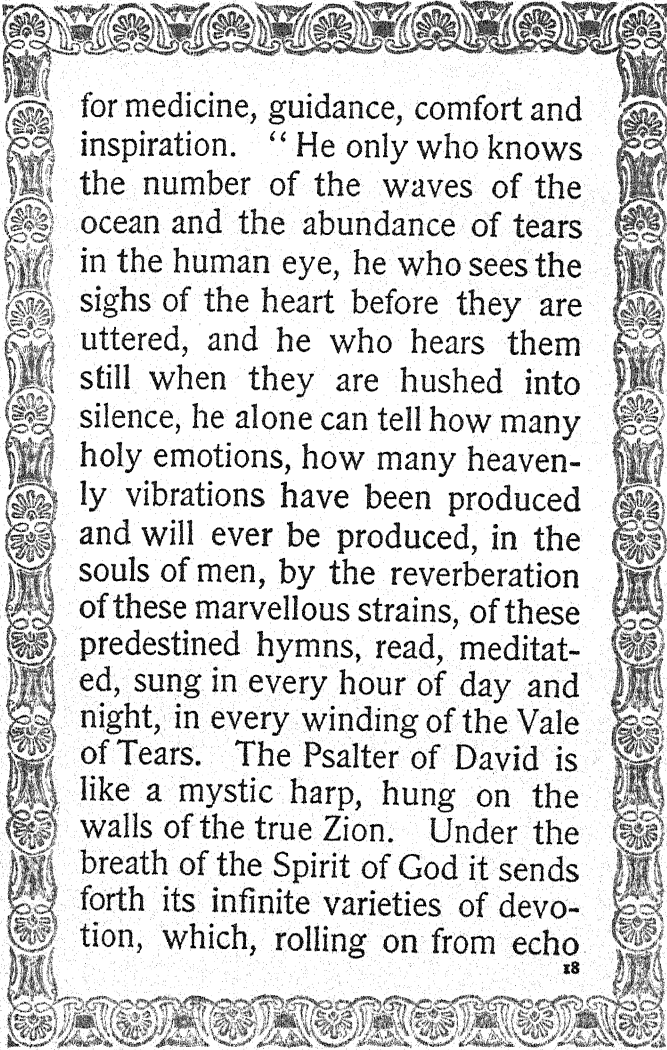
GREAT as were David's achievements in the realm of commerce and government, his influence is chiefly manifest in the realm of religion, through his songs and Psalms. What the Iliad did for Greece; what Dante's Inferno and Paradiso did for the Renaissance in Italy; what the Niebelungen did for the German tribes; what the legends of King Arthur did to develop the age of Chivalry; that and more David's songs did for the ancient Church and the Jewish people. For religion is chiefly of the heart and conscience. What the soldier, the king, and the law-maker cannot do, the poet easily accomplishes. Tools, laws, material wealth, are only the exterior



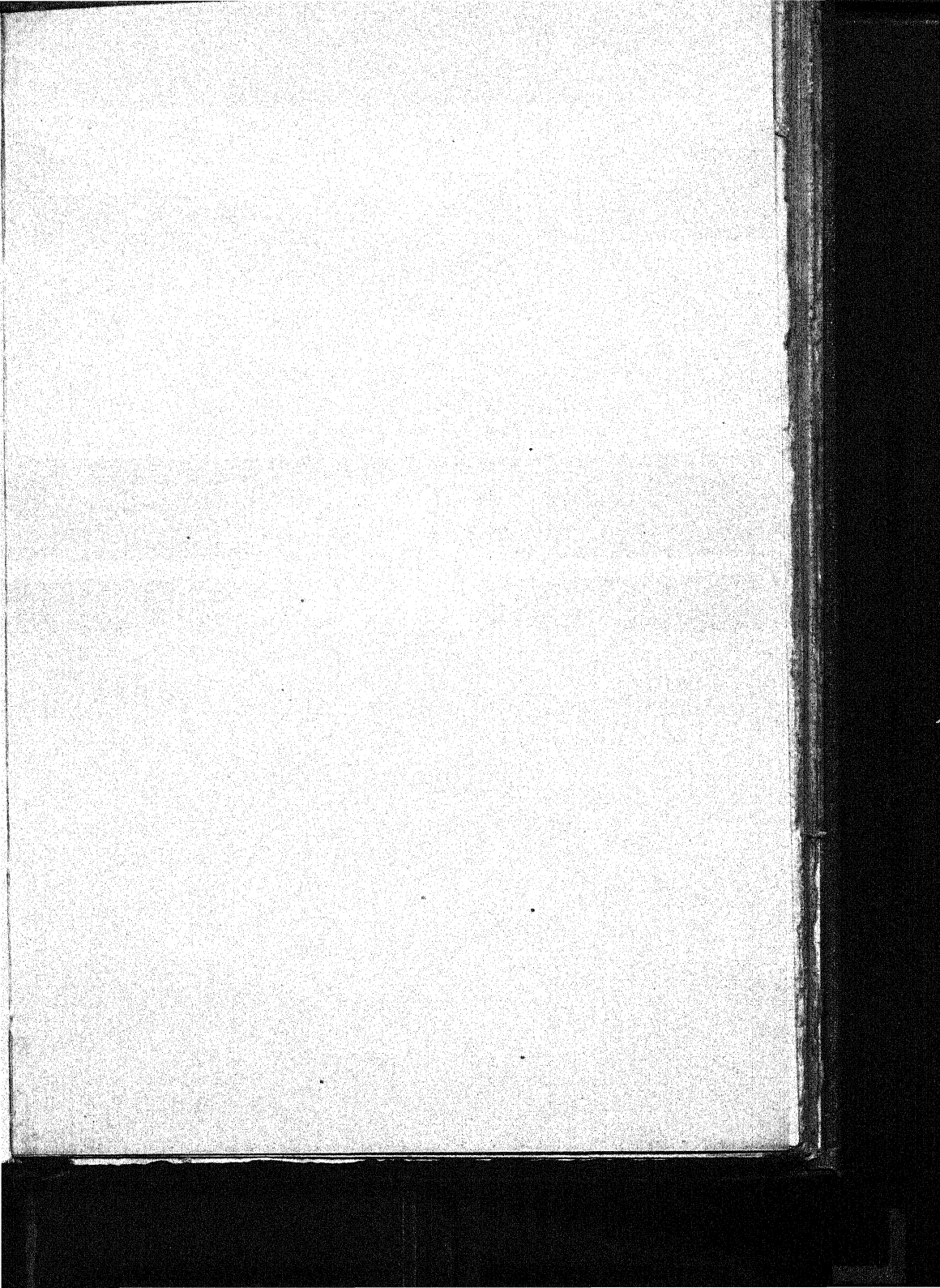
manifestation of an interior wealth. Civilization, therefore, begins with the enrichment of the affections and of the aspirations. It ends with the culture of the intellect and the development of comforts and conveniences. If Moses' laws laid the foundation, David's Psalms and songs built the superstructure. It is given to no historian to write the full story of the influence of David's Psalter. Singing the 46th Psalm, Polycarp went toward his funeral pile as did Savonarola. Strengthened by this psalm, Martin Luther braved his enemies at Worms. Cromwell's soldiers also marched forth to their battle and victory at Marston Moor, chanting the Psalms of David. Dean Stanley tells us that with the words of a psalm upon their lips, Columba, Hildebrand, Bernard, Francis of Assisi, Huss, Columbus, Xavier, Me-

lancton and Locke breathed their last.

ALL the experiences of human life seem to have been emptied into David's single career, that he might know how to interpret the universal elements of the human race. Coming from the sheep pastures, made a leader and conqueror, enthroned in the palace, exiled in the wilderness with its solitude, he entered into sympathy with peasants and shepherds, with princes and kings, with poets and jurists, and was fitted to be the inspirer and comforter of the early martyrs, the Huguenots and Waldenses, hiding in their dens and caves in time of revolution, while the exiled mourners, the unknown minstrels, the disappointed leaders, have alike turned toward the Psalms of David



for medicine, guidance, comfort and inspiration. "He only who knows the number of the waves of the ocean and the abundance of tears in the human eye, he who sees the sighs of the heart before they are uttered, and he who hears them still when they are hushed into silence, he alone can tell how many holy emotions, how many heavenly vibrations have been produced and will ever be produced, in the souls of men, by the reverberation of these marvellous strains, of these predestined hymns, read, meditated, sung in every hour of day and night, in every winding of the Vale of Tears. The Psalter of David is like a mystic harp, hung on the walls of the true Zion. Under the breath of the Spirit of God it sends forth its infinite varieties of devotion, which, rolling on from echo

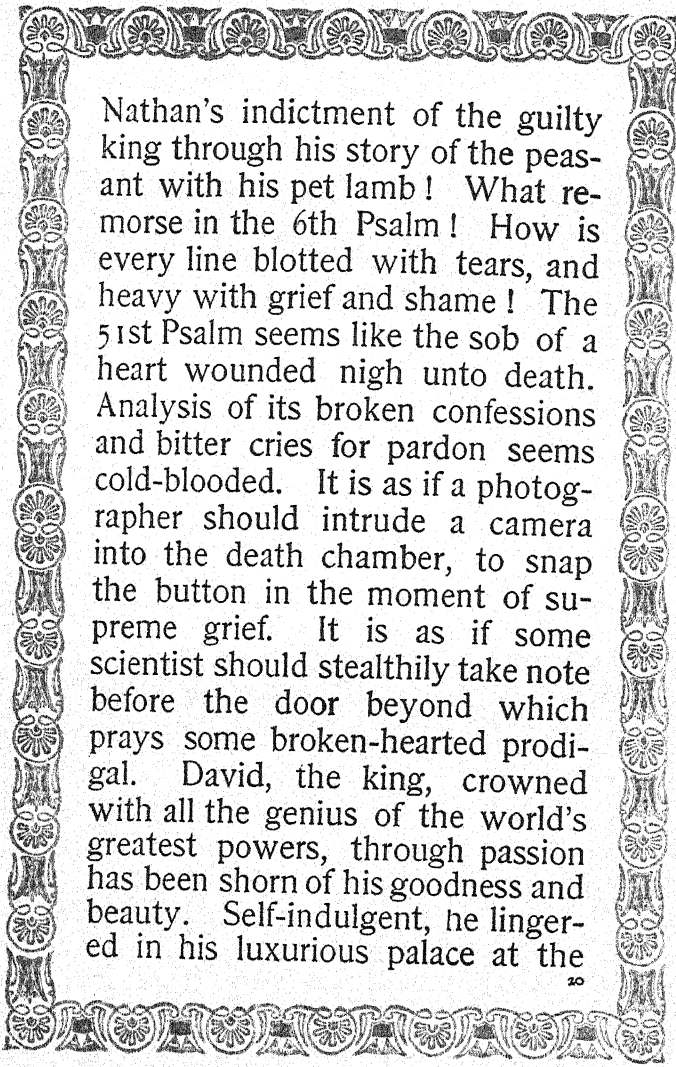




SAUL CASTS HIS JAVELIN AT DAVID

to echo, from soul to soul, awakes in each a spirit note, mingling in that one prolonged voice of thankfulness and penitence, praise and prayer.

FOR the most part the songs of David are carols of joy and victory. They are full of praise and exultation. They see God's goodness everywhere and delight in it. Midst all the din and upheaval of life, the tranquility of the Shepherd Psalm seems deep and pure as a river. But if the early Psalms represent the freshness of the soul's love, the unfaded spiritual instincts, the days "when the heart was young"; the later songs represent the great deep things of remorse, conscience, penitence, and pardon. What a tragedy is the story of David's sin against Uriah, and



Nathan's indictment of the guilty king through his story of the peasant with his pet lamb ! What remorse in the 6th Psalm ! How is every line blotted with tears, and heavy with grief and shame ! The 51st Psalm seems like the sob of a heart wounded nigh unto death. Analysis of its broken confessions and bitter cries for pardon seems cold-blooded. It is as if a photographer should intrude a camera into the death chamber, to snap the button in the moment of supreme grief. It is as if some scientist should stealthily take note before the door beyond which prays some broken-hearted prodigal. David, the king, crowned with all the genius of the world's greatest powers, through passion has been shorn of his goodness and beauty. Self-indulgent, he lingered in his luxurious palace at the

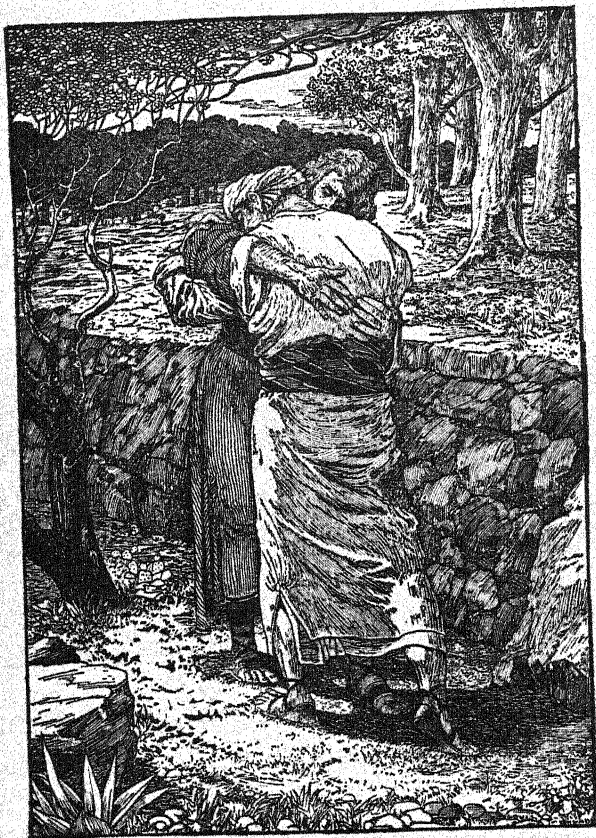
very hour when stern duty called him to the battle-field. Tempted, the king was untrue to his people, the soldier false to the chivalry of arms, the friend betrayed his friend. Uriah, first spoiled of his happiness, was set in the forefront of battle and made to fall on death.

WHEN arose Nemesis, the avenger. Conscience scourged the wicked king out into the night with its lightning and its hissing storm. But there was no softness in the midnight sky for guilty David ; only cold, blue marble that steadily blazed and never relented and was never tired. Because conscience was in him, like a thousand flaming swords, the man feared to risk himself out under the accusing stars. His anguish was the anguish of Eugene Aram, "exceeding bit-

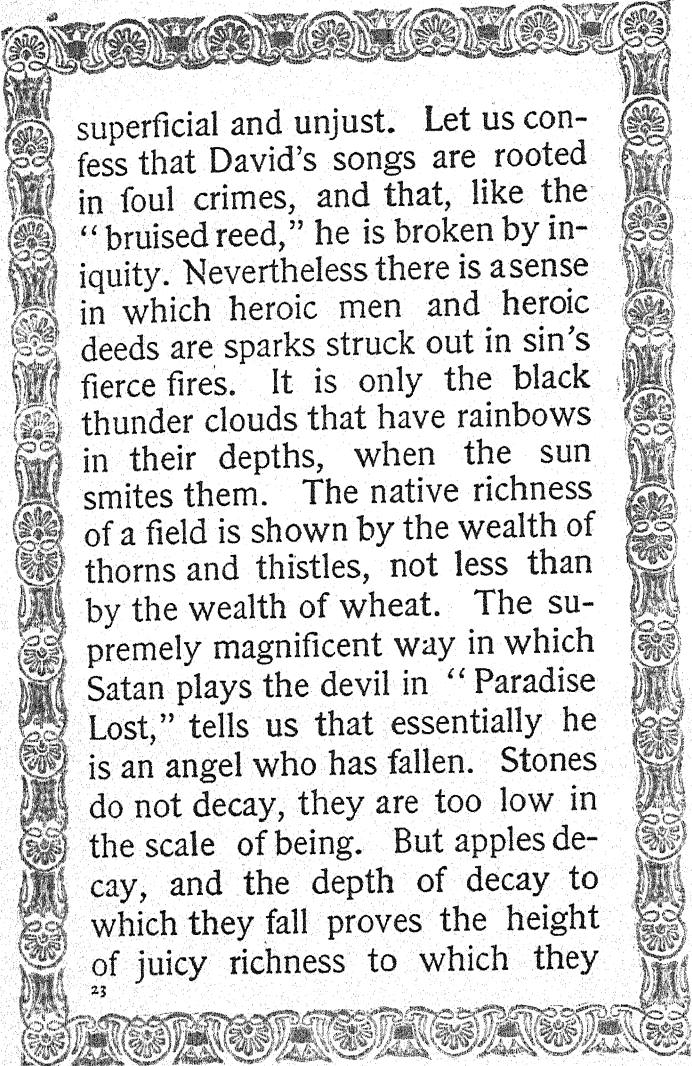
ter." His woe the woe of Macbeth, who, sleeping, moaned and still moaned, "This red right hand, the multitudinous seas it would encarnadine, making the green all red." The guilty secret that crushed him seemed like the burden of a thousand Donatellos and Lady Macbeth's rolled into one.

GROSS men and unthinking have despised David for his crimes, and confessed surprise that his songs are in the Psalter, and that history has made a place for David among the heroes of the faith. Ignorance and shallowness may sneer that the gifted poet made up for black crime by psalms, and that God thinks lightly of foul sins, since these songs, red with blood and black with guilt, are bound up in his Bible. But the sneer is both

THE PARTING OF DAVID AND JONATHAN







superficial and unjust. Let us confess that David's songs are rooted in foul crimes, and that, like the "bruised reed," he is broken by iniquity. Nevertheless there is a sense in which heroic men and heroic deeds are sparks struck out in sin's fierce fires. It is only the black thunder clouds that have rainbows in their depths, when the sun smites them. The native richness of a field is shown by the wealth of thorns and thistles, not less than by the wealth of wheat. The supremely magnificent way in which Satan plays the devil in "Paradise Lost," tells us that essentially he is an angel who has fallen. Stones do not decay, they are too low in the scale of being. But apples decay, and the depth of decay to which they fall proves the height of juicy richness to which they

first rose. Men fall! Ah! that means that they first rose.

THE names of the great men are the names of men who struggled unto blood, resisting passions within and temptations without. The great epic dramas are less than a score in number, and all are based upon some experience akin to David's. In jurisprudence we mention Moses. Now Moses was a murderer. In song, David walks with Dante. Now David compassed Uriah's death. In literature no writing is more famous than Paul's ode to "the love that never faileth." But Paul's garments were stained with Stephen's blood. In the dramas, we mention Hamlet and Lear and Macbeth, but all these pages are dark with grievous sins.

The great epics are three. But the "Iliad," the "Inferno," and "Paradise Lost," are all stories of conflicts with sin and passion.

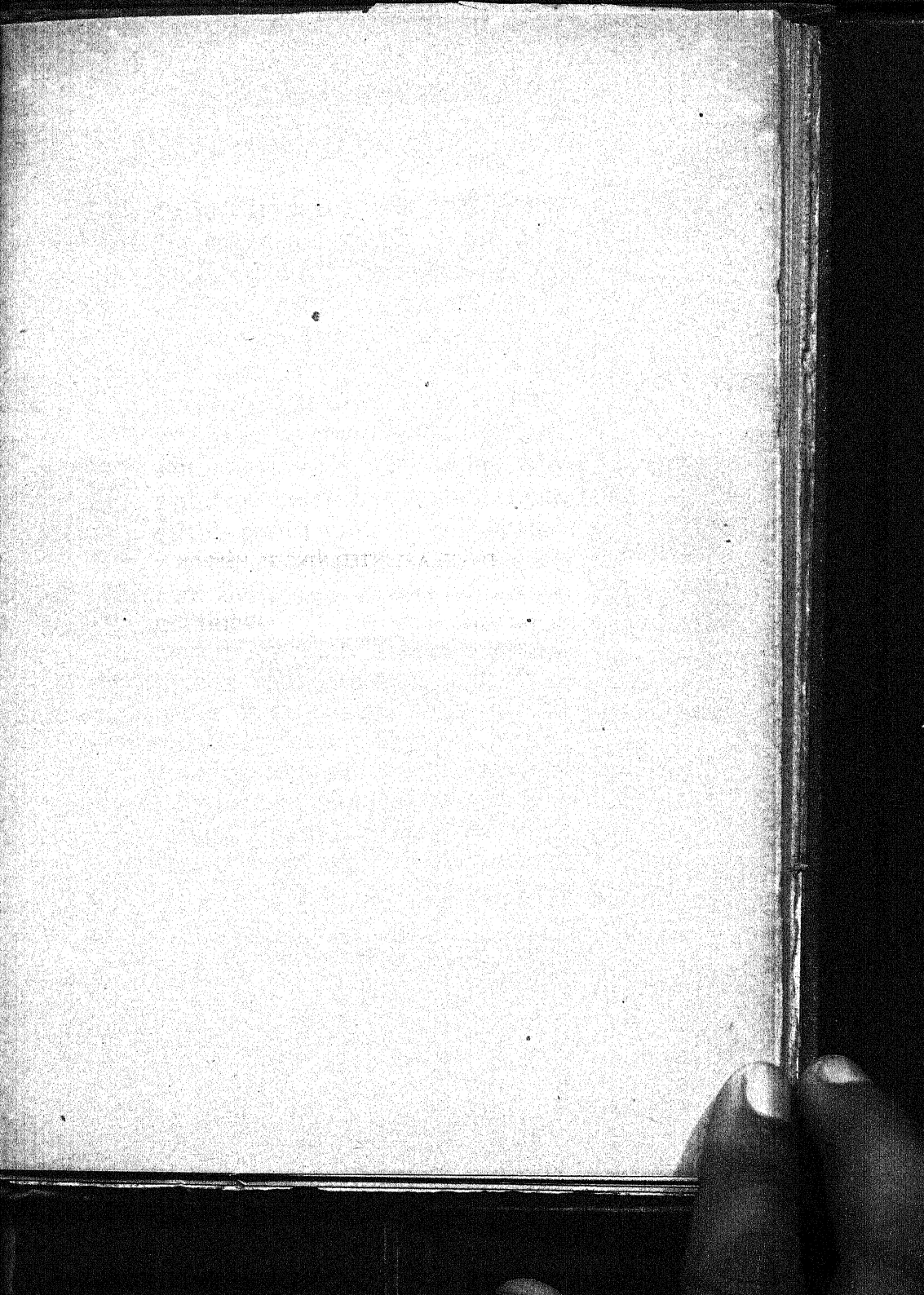
FROM David to Paul, the heroes are not soft youths lingering on languorous violet beds. They are knights pushing their way into the thick of battle, and either slaying sin, or are carried off the field upon their shields. Not that heroism and character are impossible without sin; rather that the noblest human character has a dark background. All the great events of history and all the beacon fires that guide the generations upward, are lights shining out of sin's darkness. Liberty itself seems the more glorious, standing out against the darkness of the slave market and the cotton field. Florence Nightingale

is more of an angel of light in contrast with the demonism of war in crimes. We should never have had the beautiful parable of the prodigal son but for the boy whose bitter repentance rests back upon riotous living and swine and husks.

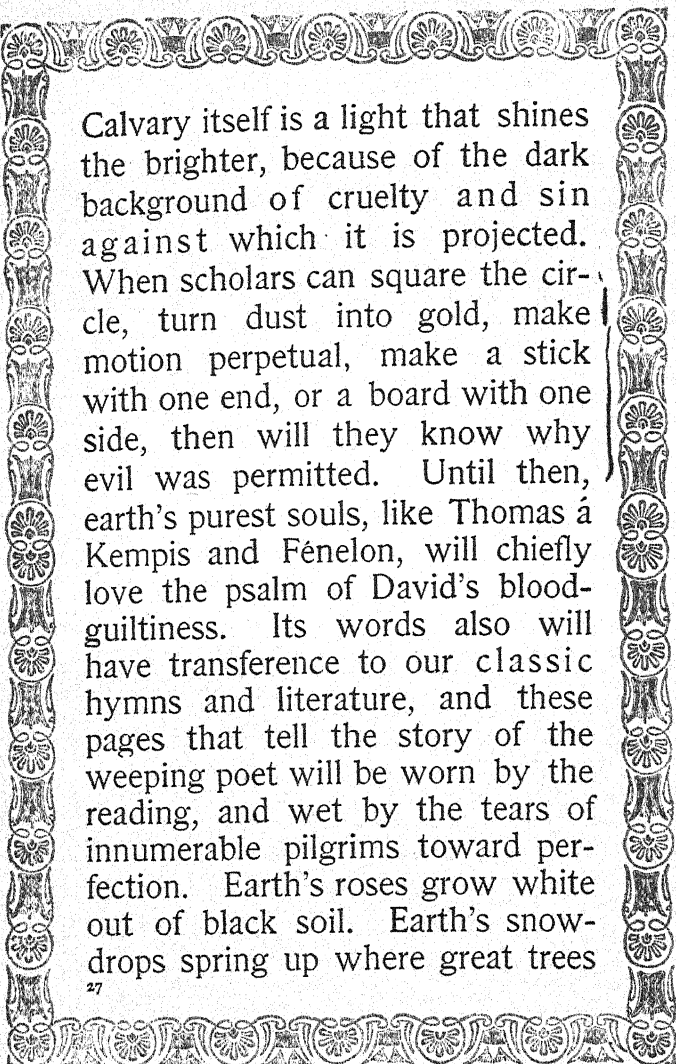
THE soil of the vineyards about Naples is burnt lava. [There the rich grapes, from which the precious wine is made, grow out of eruptions which tore out the mountain side and darkened all the sky.] Our sweetest nuts become edible only through the sharp blows of frost. Lincoln always loved his country, but the people did not know that liberty was a name engraven on his very heart. Since war came, we half hail our country's woe, because it gave Lincoln a chance to reveal himself.







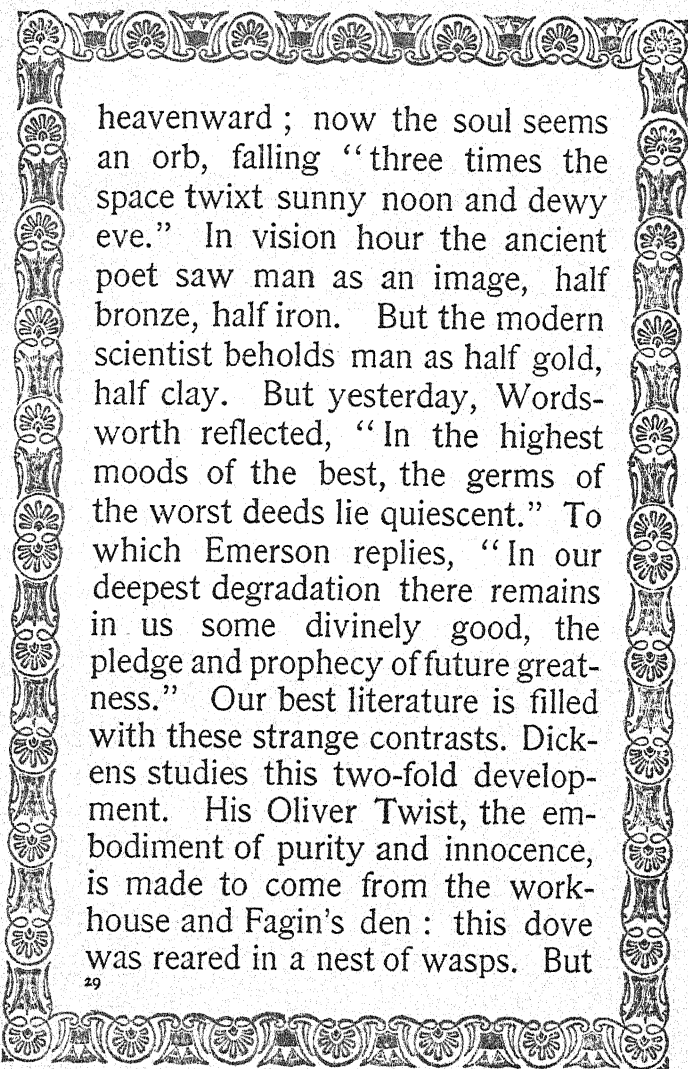
DAVID ANOINTED KING IN HEBRON



Calvary itself is a light that shines the brighter, because of the dark background of cruelty and sin against which it is projected. When scholars can square the circle, turn dust into gold, make motion perpetual, make a stick with one end, or a board with one side, then will they know why evil was permitted. Until then, earth's purest souls, like Thomas à Kempis and Fénelon, will chiefly love the psalm of David's blood-guiltiness. Its words also will have transference to our classic hymns and literature, and these pages that tell the story of the weeping poet will be worn by the reading, and wet by the tears of innumerable pilgrims toward perfection. Earth's roses grow white out of black soil. Earth's snow-drops spring up where great trees

fell down. God's law seems the whiter, His mercy the brighter, over against the blackness of David's crime and the bitterness of his remorse and shame.

MAN'S hemispheric nature has strange exhibition in David's life and career. O wondrous contradiction! the mingled good and bad in men! Like our planet, the soul is an orb, one-half midday, one-half midnight. In the morning the finest sensibilities are uppermost. At eventide the worst passions control. Now man sings just beside heaven's gate, now he wallows in the mire. The words of Robert Burns are ever in the mind: "Half beast, half saint; half demon, half divine." Now the soul, sending its pure thought upward, seems like the sea exhaling white mists



heavenward ; now the soul seems an orb, falling "three times the space twixt sunny noon and dewy eve." In vision hour the ancient poet saw man as an image, half bronze, half iron. But the modern scientist beholds man as half gold, half clay. But yesterday, Wordsworth reflected, "In the highest moods of the best, the germs of the worst deeds lie quiescent." To which Emerson replies, "In our deepest degradation there remains in us some divinely good, the pledge and prophecy of future greatness." Our best literature is filled with these strange contrasts. Dickens studies this two-fold development. His *Oliver Twist*, the embodiment of purity and innocence, is made to come from the workhouse and Fagin's den : this dove was reared in a nest of wasps. But

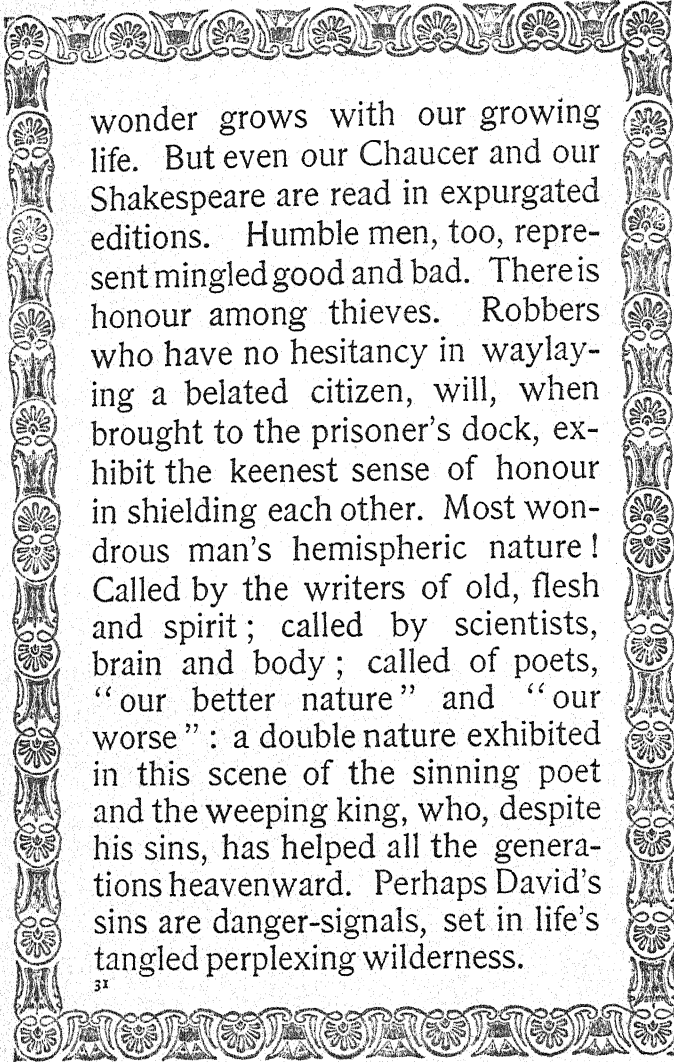
Monks, whose foot was on the spring of the trap-door, which would let his enemy into the dark well beneath, beguiles his victim by recollections of childhood and the sweet home delights : here, a serpent who was reared in a dove's nest. In his famous hymn, Byron sings like a seraph, but his "Don Juan" is the song of seven devils. Linger in Geneva, the poet's heart was touched to issues celestial, but only a week later, in Vevay, he began his songs of "the world, the flesh, and the devil."

CAN anything be more sublimely beautiful than Coleridge's Hymn to Mont Blanc ? Can aught be more brutish than the poet crazed by opium eating ? Reading Chaucer's and Shakespeare's creations, ideal in their perfect beauty, our

DAVID BRINGS THE ARK TO JERUSALEM







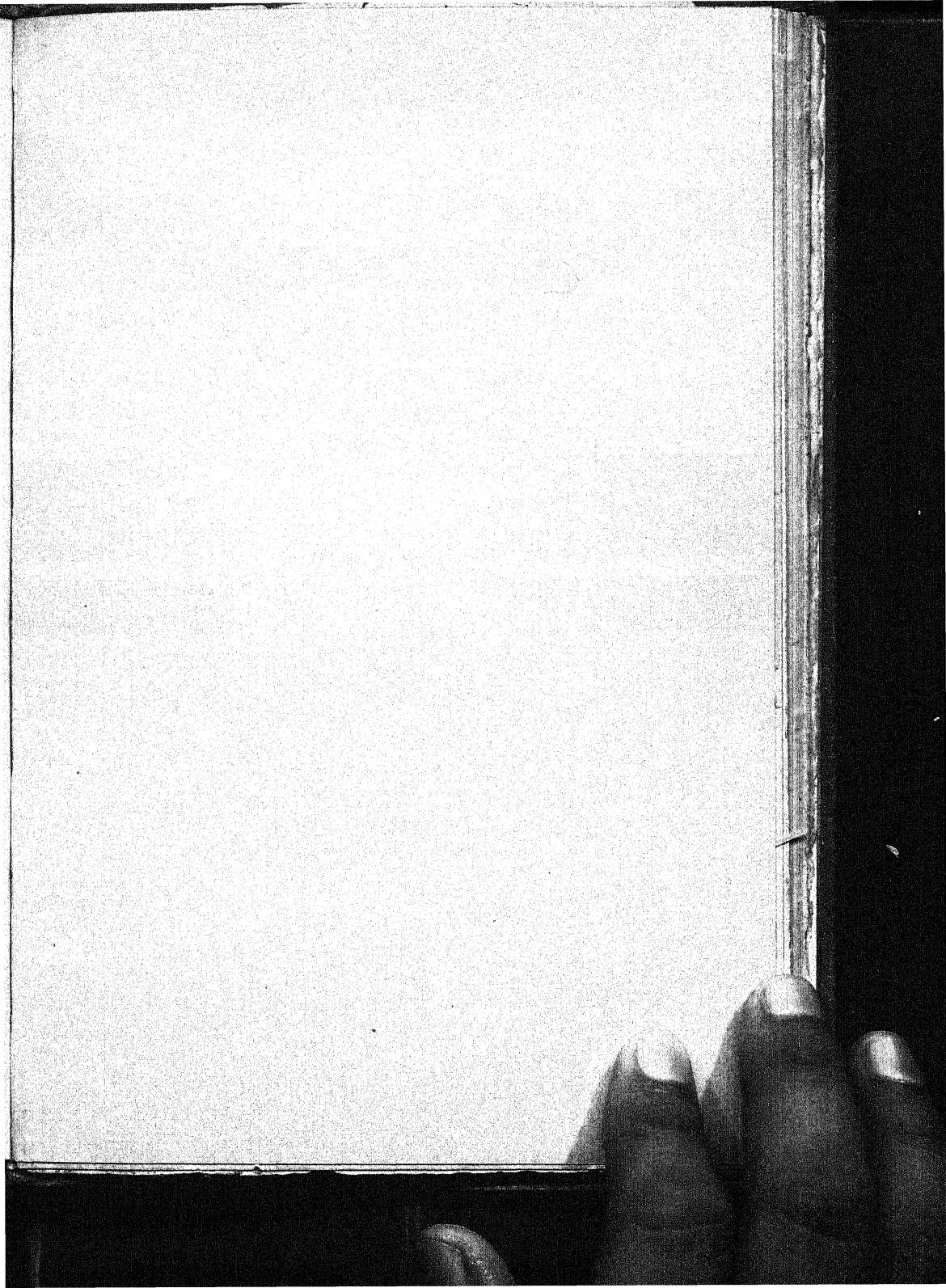
wonder grows with our growing life. But even our Chaucer and our Shakespeare are read in expurgated editions. Humble men, too, represent mingled good and bad. There is honour among thieves. Robbers who have no hesitancy in waylaying a belated citizen, will, when brought to the prisoner's dock, exhibit the keenest sense of honour in shielding each other. Most wondrous man's hemispheric nature ! Called by the writers of old, flesh and spirit ; called by scientists, brain and body ; called of poets, "our better nature" and "our worse" : a double nature exhibited in this scene of the sinning poet and the weeping king, who, despite his sins, has helped all the generations heavenward. Perhaps David's sins are danger-signals, set in life's tangled perplexing wilderness.

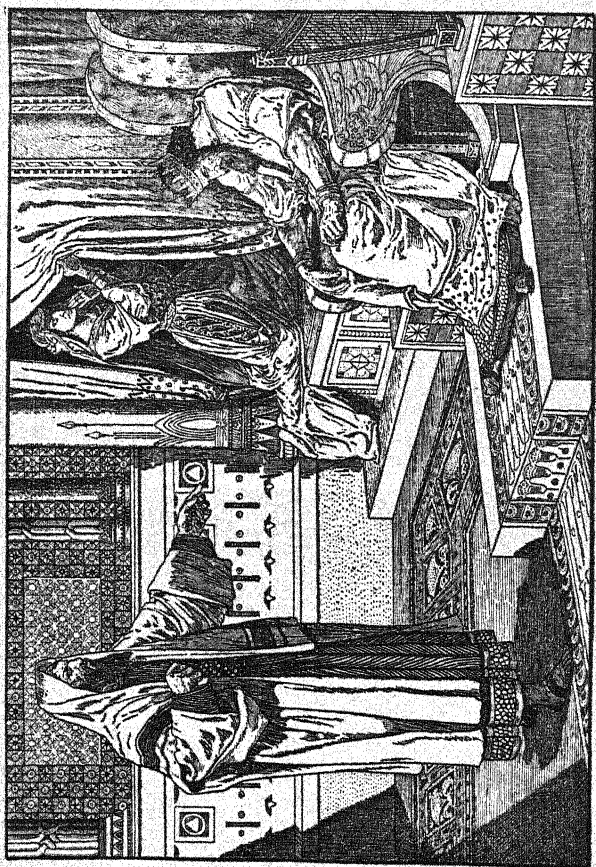
THROUGH David we learn that innocence is not character. Indeed, the comparative worthlessness of innocence has here a striking exhibition. Plainly, mere absence of scars through sin is not goodness. The boy David, stealing like a sweet sunbeam into Saul's palace, brought with him the shepherd's flute and his innocent heart. But his armour against evil was an ice armour. It quickly melted in the heat of temptation. Soon the throne and the sceptre brought opportunity for indulgence. Then into the mire he straightway plunged. His innocence proved to be mere lack of opportunity. The youth who led his flocks to the hills, greeting the morning with burst of song, was not one whit better than David the king, who set Uriah in the forefront of battle,

who first broke his friend's heart and then slew him. Innocence and character stand widely apart, even as the weedless furrows of April are separated far from the August fields, white unto the harvests. Innocence is a white page, unspotted to be sure. It is white because no pen has been laid thereon. Character is the same page, blotted indeed with ink, and thick with scars where the keen knife cut out the black stains. Innocence is unhewn marble. It is spotless because untouched of chisel. Character is the marble carved by the tool of temptation, struck by fierce blows of passion, and fashioned at last into the likeness of sons of God.

IRON newly dug out of the hills and innocent of the fire is worthless toward the battlefield. It is iron thrust into the fire, hammered upon the anvil, plunged

into hissing water, slowly tempered toward sharpness, that flashes a blade worthy of the patriot's hand. Character and culture are like colours on beauteous porcelain, they must be burned in.) Temptable men are not contemptible. Men's vices are often their unripe virtues. Multitudes are slain through geniality and openness, through exuberant kindness and cordial good fellowship. Oftentimes the rise of virtue means the expenditure of the vital forces. Many subdue their flaming passions, as travellers cross mountain streams, by waiting until the freshet has subsided, and they can go over dry shod. David, pure for want of opportunity to be impure, stands for innocence, but character is represented in Jesus Christ, who resisted unto blood, striving against sin.





THE END OF THE WORLD

NATHAN TELLS DAVID OF HIS SIN

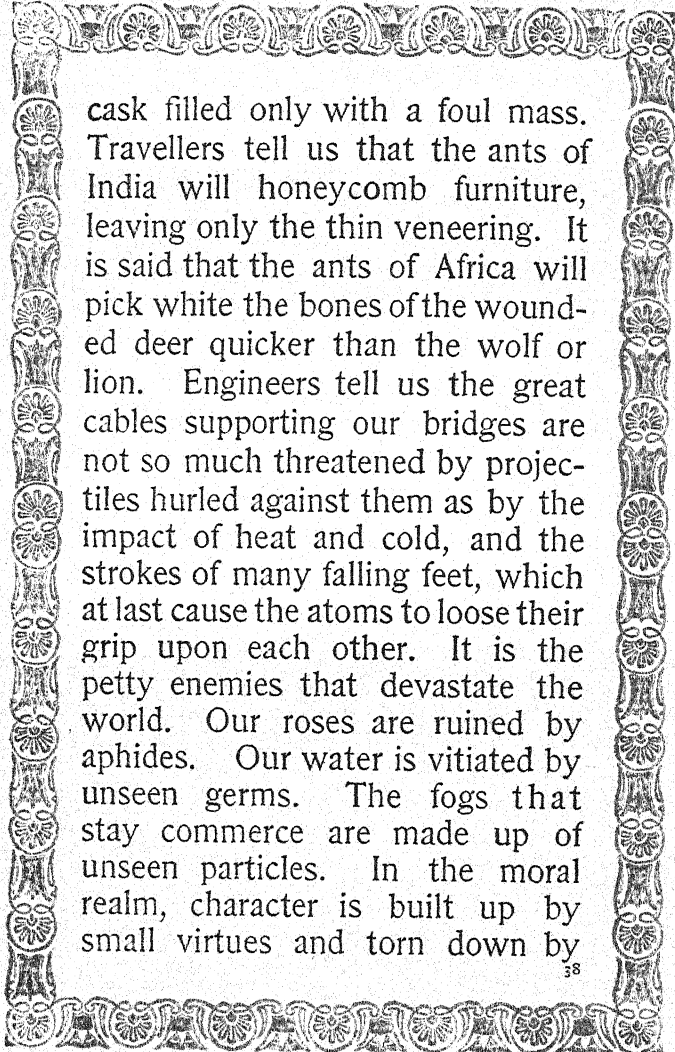
MERILY, that youth who carried an unsullied heart was not nearly so good a man as the David who felt, indeed, but afterward struggled upward, and, midst fierce attacks, maintained his integrity. Life's most beautiful sight is not the child, pure and sweet though it be. Childhood is a bough of unblossomed buds. Youth is a bundle of ungrown roots. Life's most beautiful sight is not the child crowned with beauty and full of all exuberant song. Youth also wants in richness and variety, lacks ripeness and fullness. Life's most glorious sight is a man; standing in life's waning light, softened by suffering, cultured by adversity, with faculties tempered by temptation; it may be scarred deeply by the sins of his youth, but whose

deepest hunger is for righteousness, and who confesses himself a pilgrim toward perfection. Therefore, Dr. Hitchcock said, "good men are veterans of the Old Guard, coming in from life's fierce frontier, battered and scarred, to judge the angels, doing easy duty at home."

REFLECTING upon life's critical hours, each aspiring heart will ask what goes to make up a great sin. Plainly, not rude, outbreking crimes nor tumultuous transgressions. Extraordinary sins quickly repented of are not quickly repeated. Donatello pushed no second stranger over the battlement. Jean Valjean robbed no second bishop of his silver candlesticks. David never sent a second Uriah in the forefront of battle. Society is not devastated by great dramatic crimes.

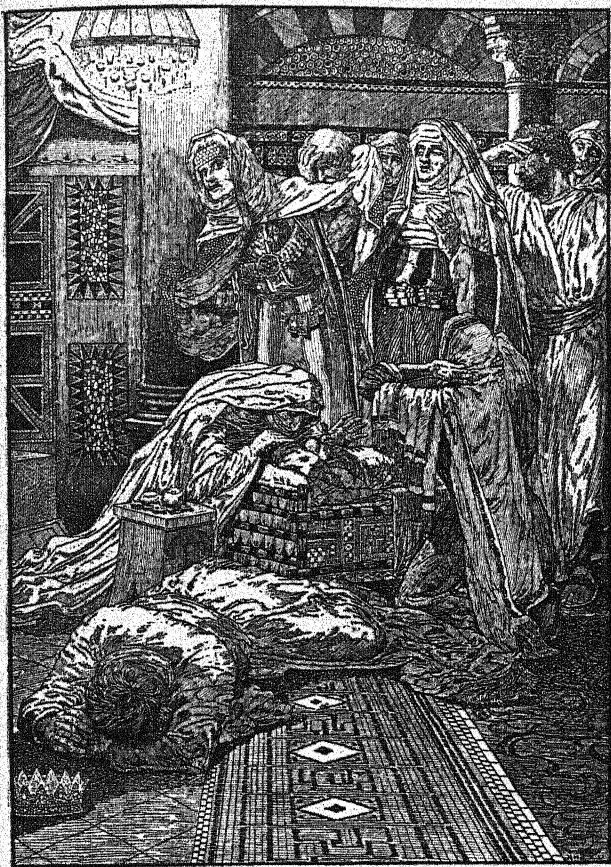
The world's happiness is not ruined by colossal sins. Our homes are wrecked by minute faults and petty selfishness. The earthquake that made the beautiful city of Lisbon a heap of ruins did less to impoverish Portugal than the laziness of its citizens during a single summer. The selfishness and the meanness of some men who are called blameless, will aggregate greater weight of iniquity than the swift blow of hands murderous for one moment.

DROWN gray and wise, David prays, "Deliver me from secret sins." He had learned that hidden faults are like the fungus in the wine casks ; the hidden vegetable growth is indeed unsuspected, yet it drinks up all the precious liquor to feed its filthiness and leaves the



cask filled only with a foul mass. Travellers tell us that the ants of India will honeycomb furniture, leaving only the thin veneering. It is said that the ants of Africa will pick white the bones of the wounded deer quicker than the wolf or lion. Engineers tell us the great cables supporting our bridges are not so much threatened by projectiles hurled against them as by the impact of heat and cold, and the strokes of many falling feet, which at last cause the atoms to loose their grip upon each other. It is the petty enemies that devastate the world. Our roses are ruined by aphides. Our water is vitiated by unseen germs. The fogs that stay commerce are made up of unseen particles. In the moral realm, character is built up by small virtues and torn down by

DAVID'S CHILD DIES

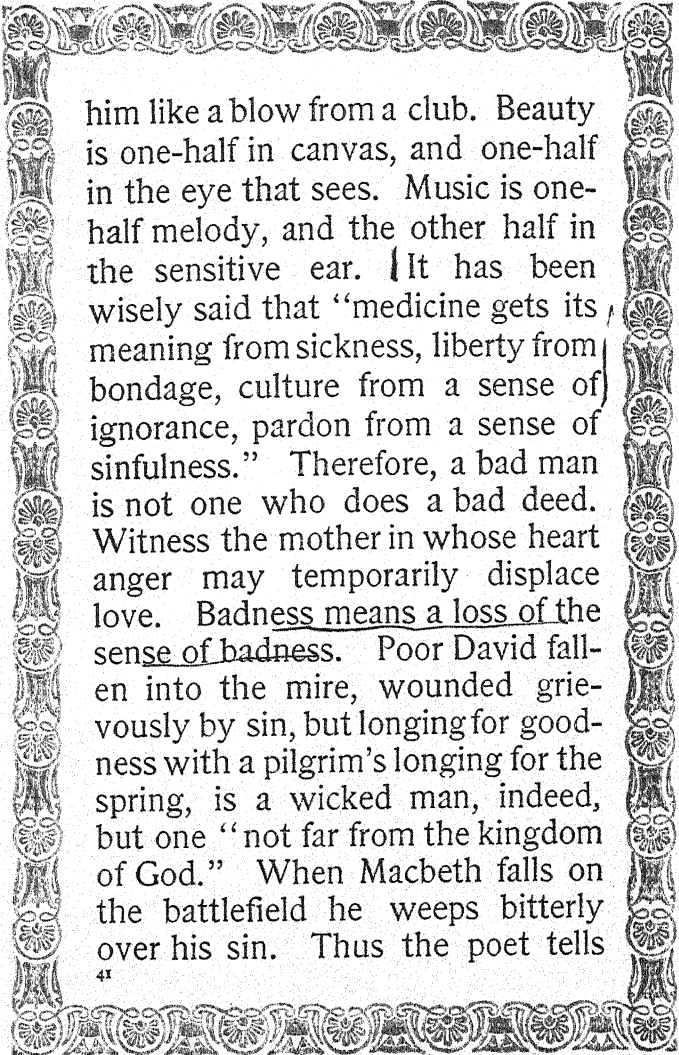


small vices. There are sharp practices in business, trifling deflections from honour, certain lowerings of the standard of truthfulness, a doubtful use of double motives that is more than two-edged swords, and these bring men into a state of character worse than ever David was at his worst, though he was unspeakably bad.

THE very keenness of David's anguish and remorse for his sin, offers the first hope of his recovery from the mire of sin. A brilliant English essayist has written an essay on the "Decline of Lying." Some who have read his book think it would have been more to the purpose had his theme been "Remorse as a Lost Art." That author or generation that has lost power to feel badly, has gone


very far toward the pit and demon-
hood. The blame of Judas is that
his conscience was hard and horny,
like unto some calloused hand that
picks up a hot iron. The praise of
David is that sin cut a bloody gash
in his conscience. Christ looked
tenderly upon the poor, bruised
reed weeping at His feet, for He
knew that she who could weep
like a little child at the memory of
her sin had still much good within.

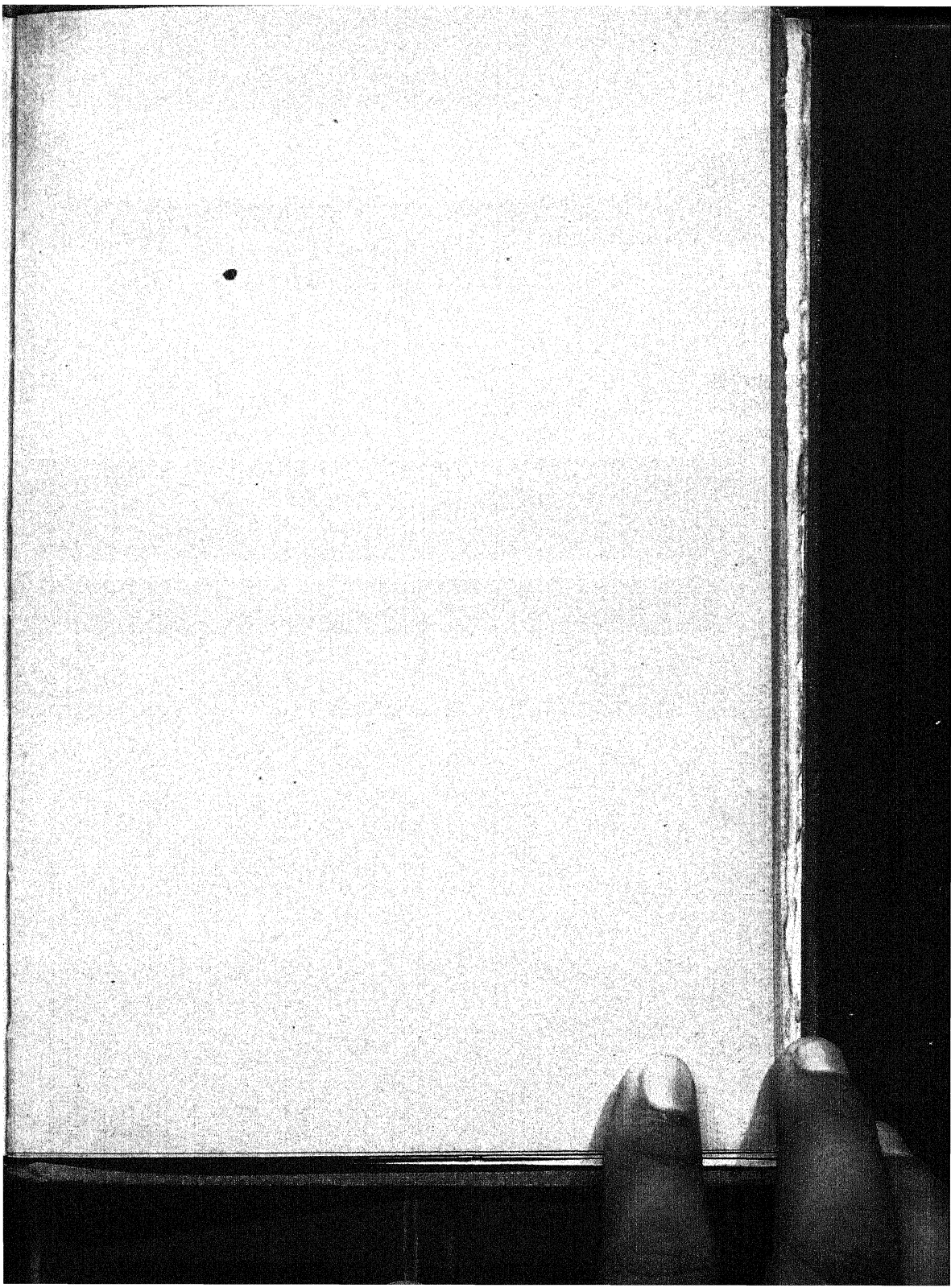
WHEN sensitiveness to sin
goes, God's mercy goes
also. A paralyzed optic
nerve blots out a sun
that is a million of miles in dia-
meter. Contrariwise, a great as-
tronomer tells us his eye was,
through training, so sensitive to
the light that, coming from a
darkened room to his great tele-
scope, the beam of sunlight felled

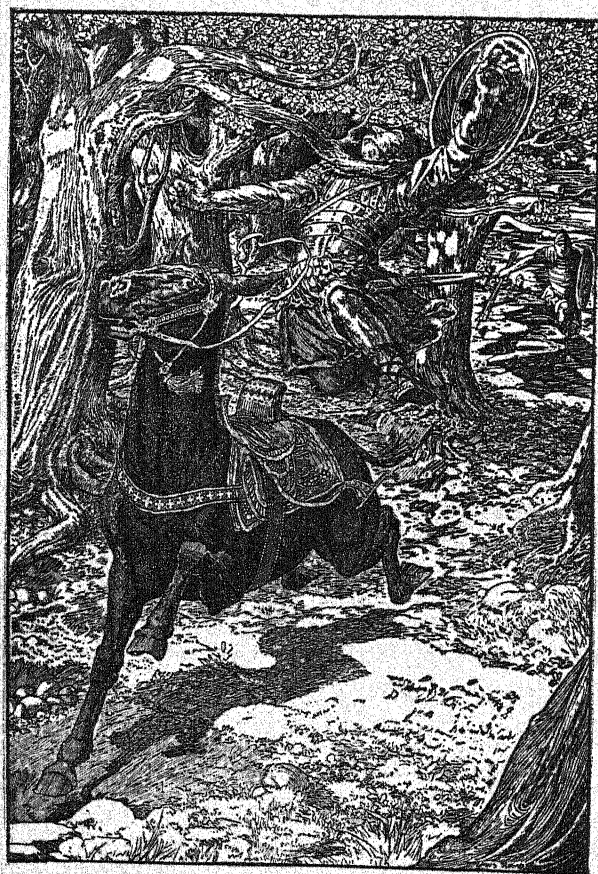


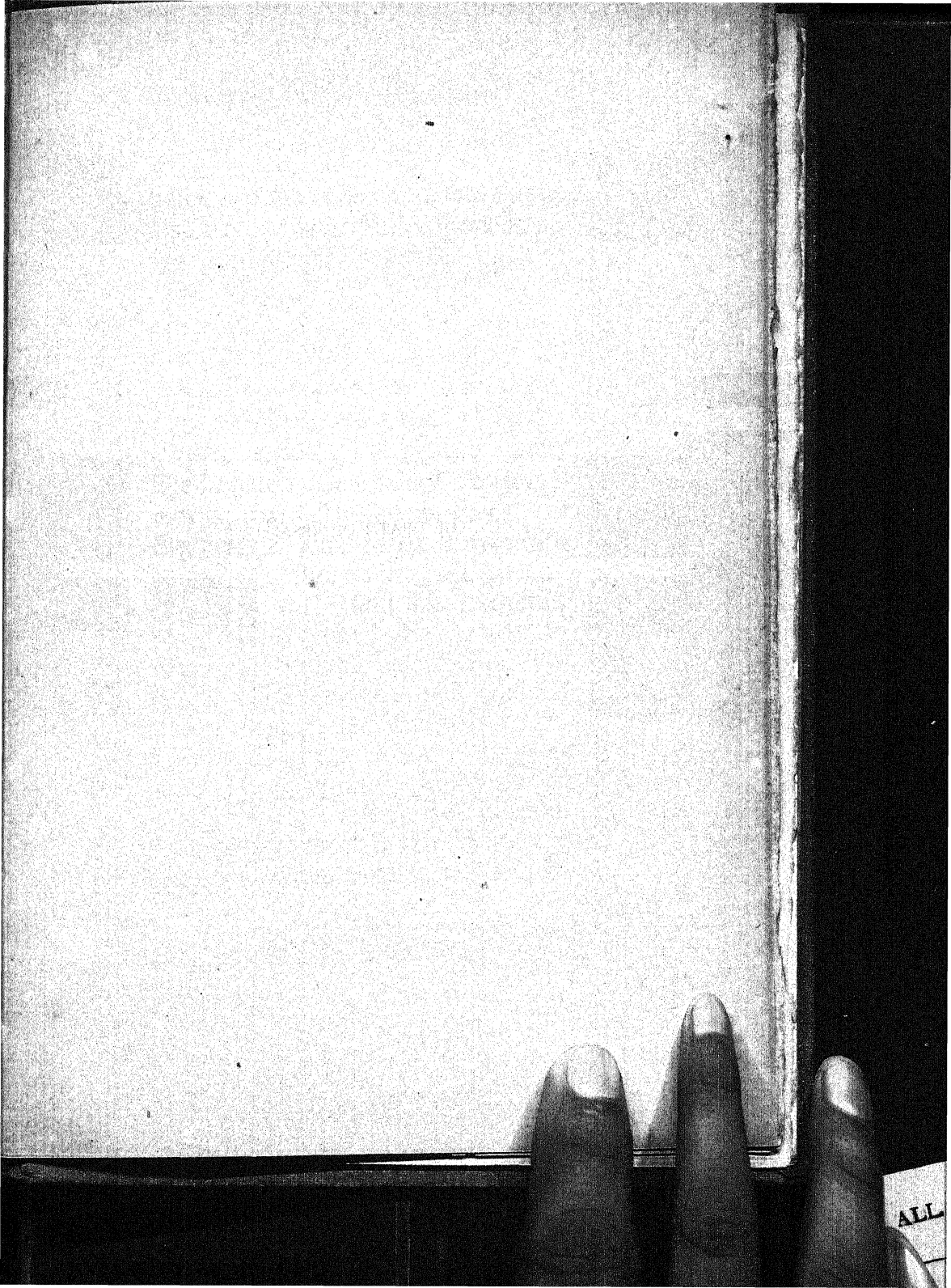
him like a blow from a club. Beauty is one-half in canvas, and one-half in the eye that sees. Music is one-half melody, and the other half in the sensitive ear. It has been wisely said that "medicine gets its meaning from sickness, liberty from bondage, culture from a sense of ignorance, pardon from a sense of sinfulness." Therefore, a bad man is not one who does a bad deed. Witness the mother in whose heart anger may temporarily displace love. Badness means a loss of the sense of badness. Poor David fallen into the mire, wounded grievously by sin, but longing for goodness with a pilgrim's longing for the spring, is a wicked man, indeed, but one "not far from the kingdom of God." When Macbeth falls on the battlefield he weeps bitterly over his sin. Thus the poet tells

us Macbeth was not utterly lost, for he, like David and the girl weeping before Christ, could still feel remorse and turn heavenward. Salvation begins with the sense of sin. David has been earth's wisest teacher regarding remorse, penitence, faith, and pardon.

 OUR libraries hold the Confessions of Augustine, Rousseau, and of Tolstoi. But no man has dealt more sternly with himself than David. His pages are thick with the expressions, "My transgressions," "my iniquity," and "my sins." Therefore our generation does well to note the relation between crisp, vigorous thinking about sin, and a fine, keen sense of the essential badness of sin. Perhaps the milk-and-water terms our generation applies to iniquities have








THE DEATH OF ABSALOM

helped to make remorse one of our lost arts. Clear thinking opens up the fountains of deep feeling. "My garments are blood-spotted," David cries, and of course he revolted from such spots. As men go up toward Emerson's fine scholarship they use Emerson's keen, discriminating speech. Growing pure, like Fénelon, men adopt Fénelon's words, that flash like swords.

HE who reads Browning's "Blot on the Escutcheon" will find his iniquities scorched by words as blazing lightnings scorch the eyeballs. The essence of a refined nature is such sensitiveness to revolting things as to forbid any familiarity with the synonyms for wrong-doing. Christ was ideal in his purity of thought, and he named men hypocrites, vipers, whited sep-

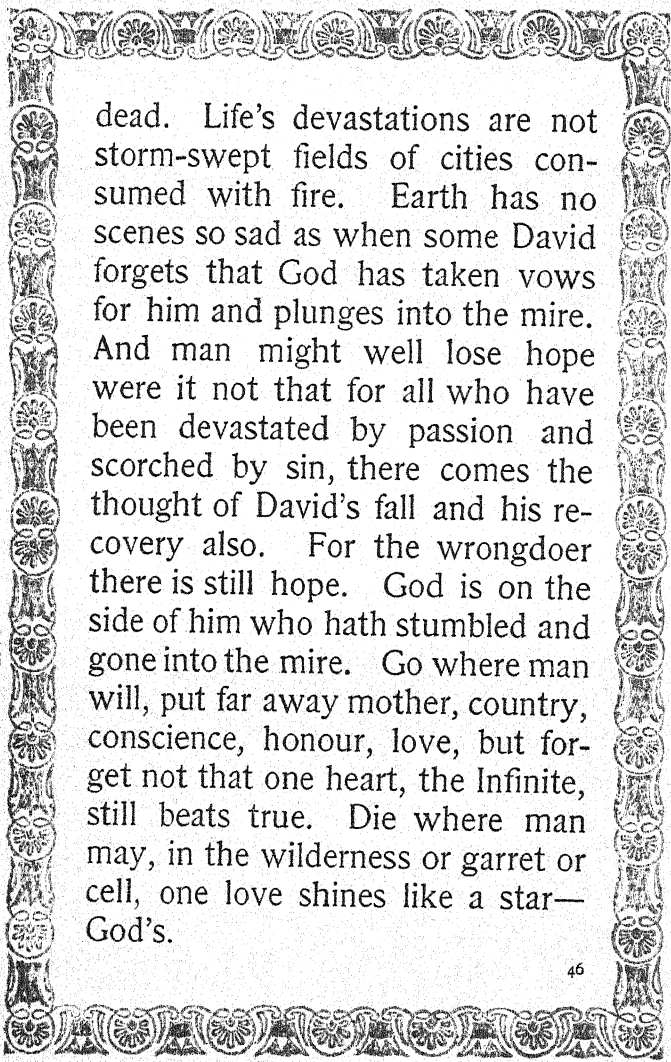
C.P.



ulchres. By a verbal exhibition of sin's ugliness, he made men see sin's devilishness. There is a sickly sentimentalism abroad that proposes to cleanse our tenements and our jails and poorhouses by waving lavender handkerchiefs before our alleys. This langourous piety is deeply offended because of David's plain talk about blood-guiltiness. This sickly tendency emasculates our manhood, takes the iron out of our blood, the brawn out of our politics, the sturdiness out of our ethics, the law and justice out of our theology. We miss the direct, open speech of David and Paul in our modern literature, and we miss also their majesty, their ring and fire and fine fibre. Perhaps the weak language of our sentimental age has made our epoch to differ from Cromwell's and Milton's

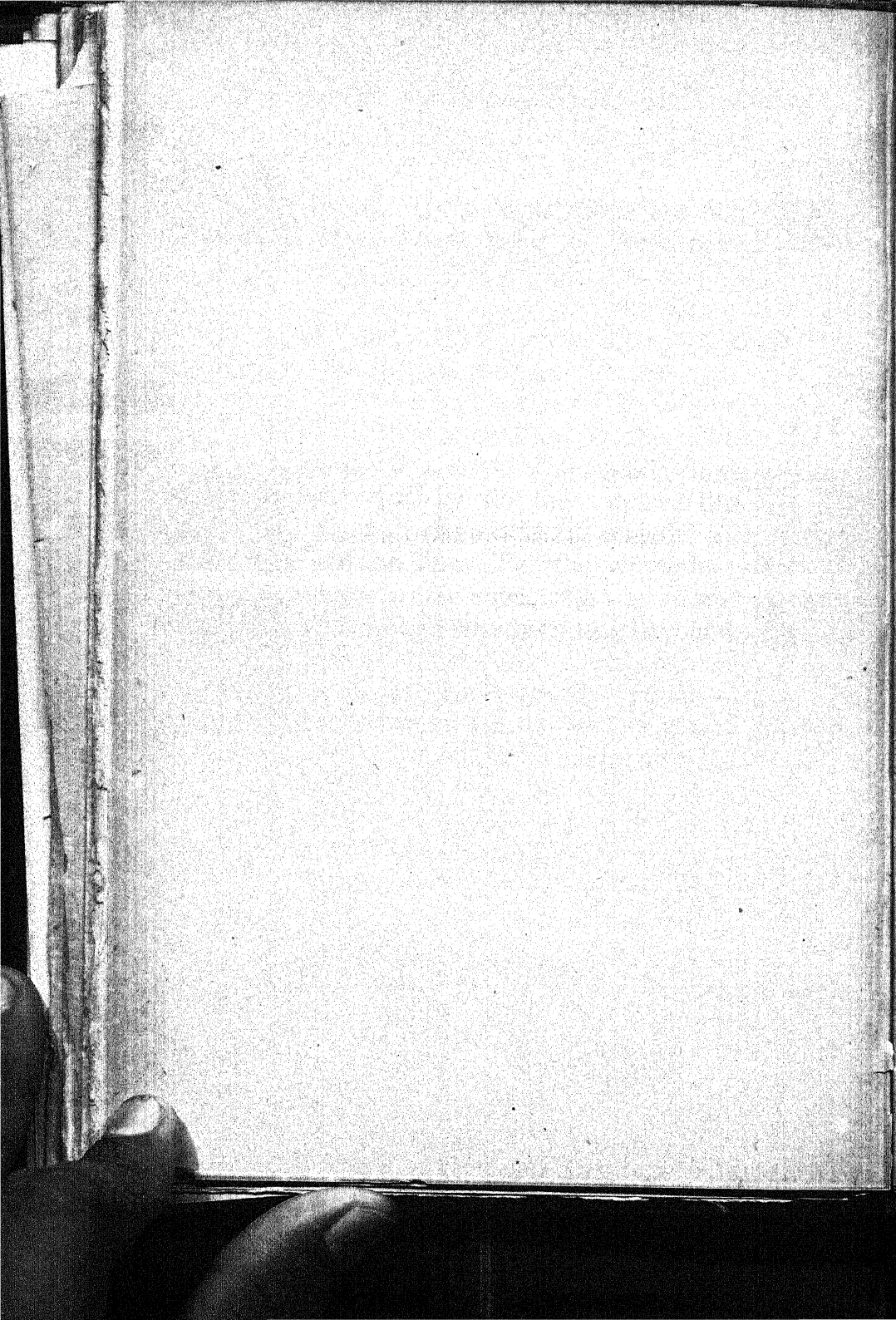
as roses differ from oaks, as pleasure yachts differ from warships. Right thinking determines right conduct and character.

DAVID'S career also teaches us that life is a battle from the cradle to the grave; that when the end comes, looking back, the only events worth remembering will be our moral victories. Then temptations conquered will hang on the walls of memory like "the swords and shields of vanquished enemies." But here and now growth is through struggle. Life means warfare. As of old the hero flung his helmet far into the ranks of the enemy and fought his way through until he regained it; so, for us not to gain new heights is to confess defeat. Earth's saddest scenes are not battlefields covered with heaps of

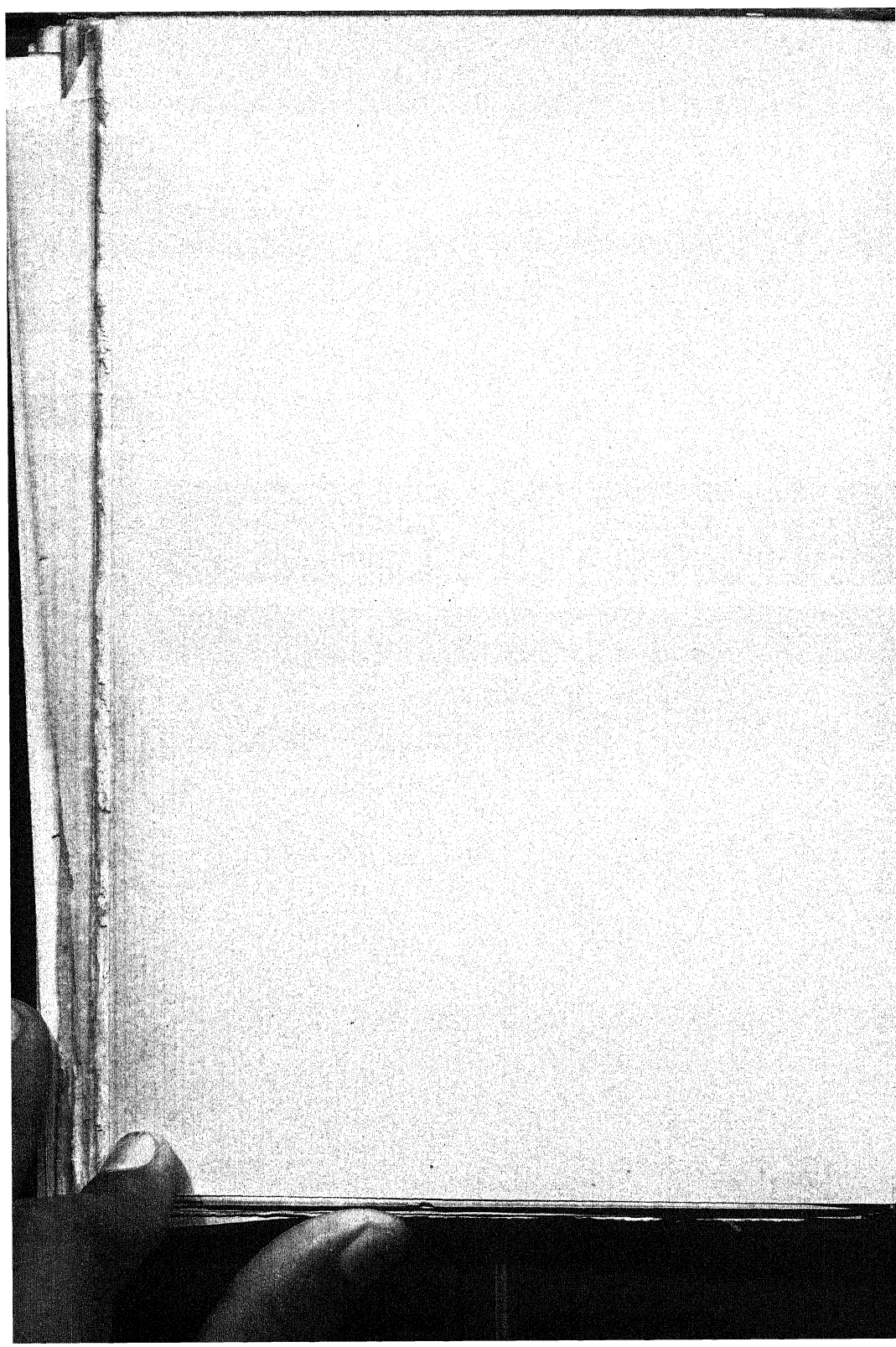


dead. Life's devastations are not storm-swept fields of cities consumed with fire. Earth has no scenes so sad as when some David forgets that God has taken vows for him and plunges into the mire. And man might well lose hope were it not that for all who have been devastated by passion and scorched by sin, there comes the thought of David's fall and his recovery also. For the wrongdoer there is still hope. God is on the side of him who hath stumbled and gone into the mire. Go where man will, put far away mother, country, conscience, honour, love, but forget not that one heart, the Infinite, still beats true. Die where man may, in the wilderness or garret or cell, one love shines like a star—God's.

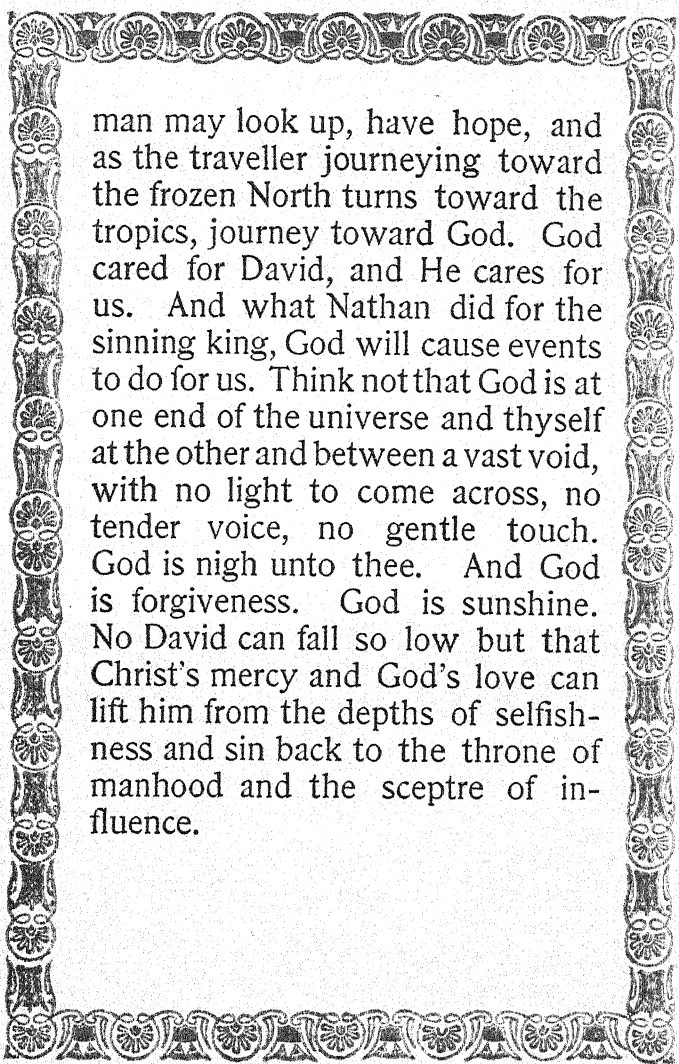
DAVID MOURNING FOR ABSALOM







THOUGH man's hand holds surgery and punishment, God's heart holds healing and recuperation. Not because man is better than he thinks, but because he is infinitely worse, God is on his side, whispering: "It is not too late to mend." Beholding the reed, tall and slender, and trampled into the mire by foot of beast, He let fly these words: "Though thou art broken utterly like the bruised reed, my strength shall be tempered to gentleness and thou shalt be enabled to stand upright and recover thyself." Discerning the taper freshly lighted and ready to go out at the slightest breath of wind, He said: "Though thy aspiration be as feeble as the candle's flicker, yet will I tend and nourish it into flaming strength." Therefore,



man may look up, have hope, and as the traveller journeying toward the frozen North turns toward the tropics, journey toward God. God cared for David, and He cares for us. And what Nathan did for the sinning king, God will cause events to do for us. Think not that God is at one end of the universe and thyself at the other and between a vast void, with no light to come across, no tender voice, no gentle touch. God is nigh unto thee. And God is forgiveness. God is sunshine. No David can fall so low but that Christ's mercy and God's love can lift him from the depths of selfishness and sin back to the throne of manhood and the sceptre of influence.



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